



UPDATE 1-Two U.N. peacekeepers killed in Haiti.

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, March 20 (Reuters) - Two U.N. peacekeepers were shot and killed in Haiti on Sunday in gunfights with rebel former soldiers who control parts of the Caribbean nation and led a revolt that ousted its president last year.

The soldiers, one from Sri Lanka and one from Nepal, were the first U.N. troops killed by violence since the international forces were sent in June to help stabilize Haiti after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was driven into exile in February 2004.

The soldier from Nepal was killed in an attack by former soldiers occupying the Terre-Rouge area of Haiti's Central Plateau, Cardona said.

The Sri Lankan soldier was killed as U.N. troops and Haitian police evicted Haitian rebels from a police station they occupied for months and used as a base in the southern town of Petit-Goave, said the police director for the region, Renan Etienne.

"During the exchange of fire, one U.N. soldier from Sri Lanka and two among the police station occupiers were killed," Etienne told Reuters.

Eleven people wounded in the gunfight were taken to a hospital, including three Sri Lankan soldiers.

A spokesman for the U.N. civilian police, Jean-Francois Vezina, said police and U.N. troops had retaken control of the police station. U.N. troops detained 25 former soldiers and seized 13 weapons, he said.

Members of Haiti's defunct army, who helped lead the rebellion against Aristide, control several parts of the country.

Aristide disbanded Haiti's coup-prone army in 1995 during his first term as president. He was re-elected in 2001 for a five-year term but fled the country on Feb. 29, 2004, in the face of a month-long armed revolt and under U.S. and French pressure to quit. He is exiled in South-Africa.

Former soldiers demanded the reinstatement of the military and have clashed with Haiti's interim government over its refusal. Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said the decision on whether to reestablish the army should be made by the new government chosen in elections scheduled for November.

The U.N. special envoy to Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdes, is the civilian chief of the 7,400-strong U.N. peacekeeping force made up of soldiers and civilian police from dozens of nations.

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